## What is claimed is:

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1. A method of creating a business to business exchange for shipments, the method comprising:

a shipper specifying shipping requirements that comprise information that describes a requested shipping service and a commodity to be shipped; and

initiating an auction for the requested shipping service as described by the shipping requirements, wherein the auction allows service provides to place bids in an attempt to secure a contract to perform the requested shipping service.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein one or more auctions have been initiated, the method further comprising:

viewing the one or more auctions, the viewing comprising a service provider examining at least one shipping requirement of at least one auction.

- 3. The method of claim 2, further comprising the service provider selecting one of the one or more auctions in order to place a bid on the selected auction.
- 4. The method of claim 2, further comprising the service provider placing a bid on one of the one or more auctions, wherein the bid includes a price and one or more price components that identify what features are included in the price.
- 5. The method of claim 2, further comprising filtering the one or more auctions according to criteria specified by the service provider, wherein the specified criteria correspond to certain shipping requirements.
  - 6. The method of claim 2, further comprising sorting the one or more auctions according to a criteria selected by the service provider, wherein selected criteria corresponds to a certain shipping requirement.

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- 7. The method of claim 1, wherein a plurality of bids that include one or more price components have been placed on the auction, the method further comprising the shipper completing the auction by accepting one of the bids.
- 5 8. The method of claim 7, wherein one or more of the plurality of bids includes a lower price than the accepted bid.
  - 9. The method of claim 1, further comprising notifying a service provider of the auction, wherein the service provider has specified criteria for notification and the auction meets the specified criteria.
  - 10. The method of claim 1, wherein a bid that includes one or more price components has been placed on the auction, the method further comprising notifying the shipper that the bid has been placed on the auction.
  - 11. The method of claim 1, wherein the method is conducted over a communication medium.
  - 12. The method of claim 11, wherein the communication medium is the Internet.
  - 13. The method of claim 12, wherein the method is conducted with at least one server and at least one user machine including a display, the method further comprising accessing via the display a screen to create an auction.
- 25 14. The method of claim 1, wherein a plurality of auctions have been initiated, the method further comprising monitoring the initiated auctions.
  - 15. The method of claim 1, further comprising approving the initiated auction, thereby making the initiated auction a live auction available for bidding.
  - 16. The method of claim 15, further comprising managing the live auction.

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- 17. The method of claim 16, wherein the managing the live auction comprises inviting a bid from a service provider.
- 18. The method of claim 16, wherein the live auction has an expiration time and the managing the live auction comprises extending the live auction past the expiration time.
- 19. The method of claim 15, wherein the live auction closes due to the lack of an acceptance of a bid, the method further comprises managing the closed auction.
- 20. The method of claim 1, wherein the specifying includes specifying within the shipping requirements an indication of a shipping route.
- 21. The method of claim 1, wherein the specifying includes specifying one of the following for the shipping service: a LCL one-time shipment, a FCL one-time shipment or a service contract.
  - 22. The method of claim 1, wherein the specifying includes specifying within the shipping requirements an indication of a number of containers required.
  - 23. The method of claim 1, wherein the specifying includes indicating a corresponding HTSUS code for the commodity.
  - 24. The method of claim 1, wherein the specifying includes indicating within the shipping requirements whether the commodity is hazardous.
    - 25. The method of claim 1, wherein the specifying includes indicating within the shipping requirements a penalty per container.
- 30 26. The method of claim 1, wherein the specifying includes indicating within the shipping requirements a size of container.

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- 27. The method of claim 1, further comprising the shipper indicating a range of acceptable bids.
- 28. The method of claim 4, further comprising indicating shipping terms within the price components.
- 29. The method of claim 1, wherein a plurality of bids comprising a price, price components and a service provider identity are placed on the auction, the method further comprising displaying the plurality of bids so that the shipper can view the plurality of bids.
- 30. The method of claim 1, wherein a plurality of bids, each bid comprising a price, price components and a service provider identity, are placed on the auction by a plurality of service providers, the method further comprising displaying the plurality of bids so that a service provider can only view the price and price components of the bids of other service providers.
- 31. The method of claim 1, wherein a bid has been placed on the auction by a service provider and has been accepted by the shipper, the method further comprising the shipper providing feedback on the service provider, the feedback comprising a rating of the service provider.
- 32. The method of claim 1, wherein the shipper is any one of the following: an importer, exporter, shipping association or a NVOCC.
- 33. The method of claim 2, wherein the service provider is any one of the following: an ocean carrier, a ocean carrier's agent, a freight forwarder or a NVOCC.
- 30 34. An online shipping exchange comprising:
  a server that hosts the online shipping exchange, comprising:
  a secondary storage device; and

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and the second user is a service provider.

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		a connection to a network, wherein the server can be accessed
		from the network;
		a user machine, that enables user access to the server, comprising:
		a display;
5		an input device; and
		a connection to the network, wherein the user machine can
		access the server through the network; and
		a plurality of screens, that are supported by the server and presented
		on the display, comprising:
10		a create-an-auction screen, that enables a first user to enter
		shipping requirements to create an auction, wherein shipping
		requirements comprise information that describes a requested
		shipping service and the create-an-auction screen comprises sections
		for entering the shipping requirements, the sections including a
15		commodity section; and
		an auction detail screen, that enables a second user to place a
		bid on the auction, wherein the auction detail screen includes the
		shipping requirements for the auction.
20	35.	The online shipping exchange of claim 31, further comprising:
	55.	a view all requests screen that comprises pending shipping services
		auctions, wherein the view all requests screen allows the second user to view
		the pending shipping services auctions.
		the pending simpping services adecions.
25	36.	The online shipping exchange of claim 31, wherein the auction detail screen
	comp	rises a section that includes bids placed on the shipping services auction, so
	that th	ne first user can determine whether to accept one of the placed bids.

The online shipping exchange of claim 31, wherein the first user is a shipper

	38.	The online shipping exchange of claim 31, wherein the shipping services		
	comprise a LCL shipment, a FCL shipment or a services contract.			
	39.	A method operative at a server for creating a business to business exchange		
for shipments, the method comprising:				
		displaying a list of live auctions for shipping services that are		
		available for bidding;		
		identifying a commodity being shipped for each of the live auctions;		
		storing a bid placed on one of the live auctions, wherein the bid		
		includes price components; and		
		displaying the bid so that a first user may evaluate the bid.		
	40.	The method of claim 36 further comprising notifying a second user that an		
auction that meets criteria specified by the second user is available for bidding.				
	41.	The method of claim 40, wherein the notifying comprises sending an email		
	messa	ge to the second user.		
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	42.	The method of claim 36 further comprising notifying the first user that a bid		
	has be	en placed on an auction submitted by the first user.		
	43.	The method of claim 42, wherein the notifying comprises sending an email		
message to the first user.				

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- 44. The method of claim 39, wherein the first user is a shipper.
- 45. The method of claim 44, wherein the shipper is a NVOCC.

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The method of claim 40, wherein the second user is a service provider.

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47. The method of claim 46, wherein the service provider is a NVOCC.